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contents



ROB HAVENS '88

FEATURES

16 SPRING FOOTBALL

Some of our favorite shots from camp.

18 BUZZ WILLIAMS

12th Man welcomes back new basketball coach.

BY ROB HAVENS '88

20 SWEET 16

Our women's basketball team makes a run to the Sweet 16.

BY ROB HAVENS '88

22 AGGIES BEAT T.U.

Rivalry still strong as Aggie baseball beats Horns.

BY ROB HAVENS '88

24 2019 FOOTBALL SIGNING CLASS

Jimbo Signs #3 Class

29 TEXAS A&M SPORT CLUBS

AI spotlights Polo & Wakeboarding Clubs

BY ROB HAVENS '88

IN EVERY ISSUE

04 Publisher's Note

06 Snapshots

13 Scoreboard

30 The 12th Man

On the Cover: New Aggie Men's Basketball Coach Buzz Williams addresses the 12th Man at his welcome home celebration at Reed Arena. Photo by Rob Havens '88

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Howdy Ags!

Spring is in the air and Aggie sports are in high gear! The biggest news in town is that the Aggies have a new men's basketball coach. Buzz Williams has arrived and the future looks bright for men's hoops. He returns to A&M after a successful run as a head coach at three different schools. Inside this issue, you will find an introduction to the new coach.

Our baseball team has moved up the polls and is currently ranked No. 9 in the D1 Baseball rankings. They lead the SEC West and seem to get better every week. In the next few pages, read about their big wins over TCU, Texas and a series win over No. 1 Vandy.

Coach Gary Blair does what he does again by taking a young group of ladies and building them into a Sweet 16 team. Please enjoy our recap of the ladies journey in the 2019 NCAA tournament.

The Men's and Women's track team must feel like it's Christmas Eve as they prepare to have their first outdoor meet at the new E.B. Cushing Stadium. They host the Reveille meet on April 6th.

Our softball team has won seven games in a row, including a win over No. 4 Alabama. The Tide came into the game undefeated with a 33-0 record. This young team is starting to put all of the pieces together to continue the winning legacy of Aggie Softball.

Oh, and by the way, Aggie Spring Football is in high gear too! Coach Fisher is hard at work to get this team ready for the toughest schedule in college football this fall. The Ags have eight early enrollees that are getting up to speed. Inside this issue, we break down the 2019 signing class, which was ranked as the No. 3 class in the country, making it the highest ranked class in program history.

The speed and athleticism being displayed on the spring ball fields is exceptional. Jimbo has some holes to fill from last year's team but it looks like there are plenty of guys ready to step up and shine.

All of the other spring sports are working hard and competing for championships and it's a great time to get out and support these student-athletes.

Gig'em Ags!

Rob '88



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snapshot

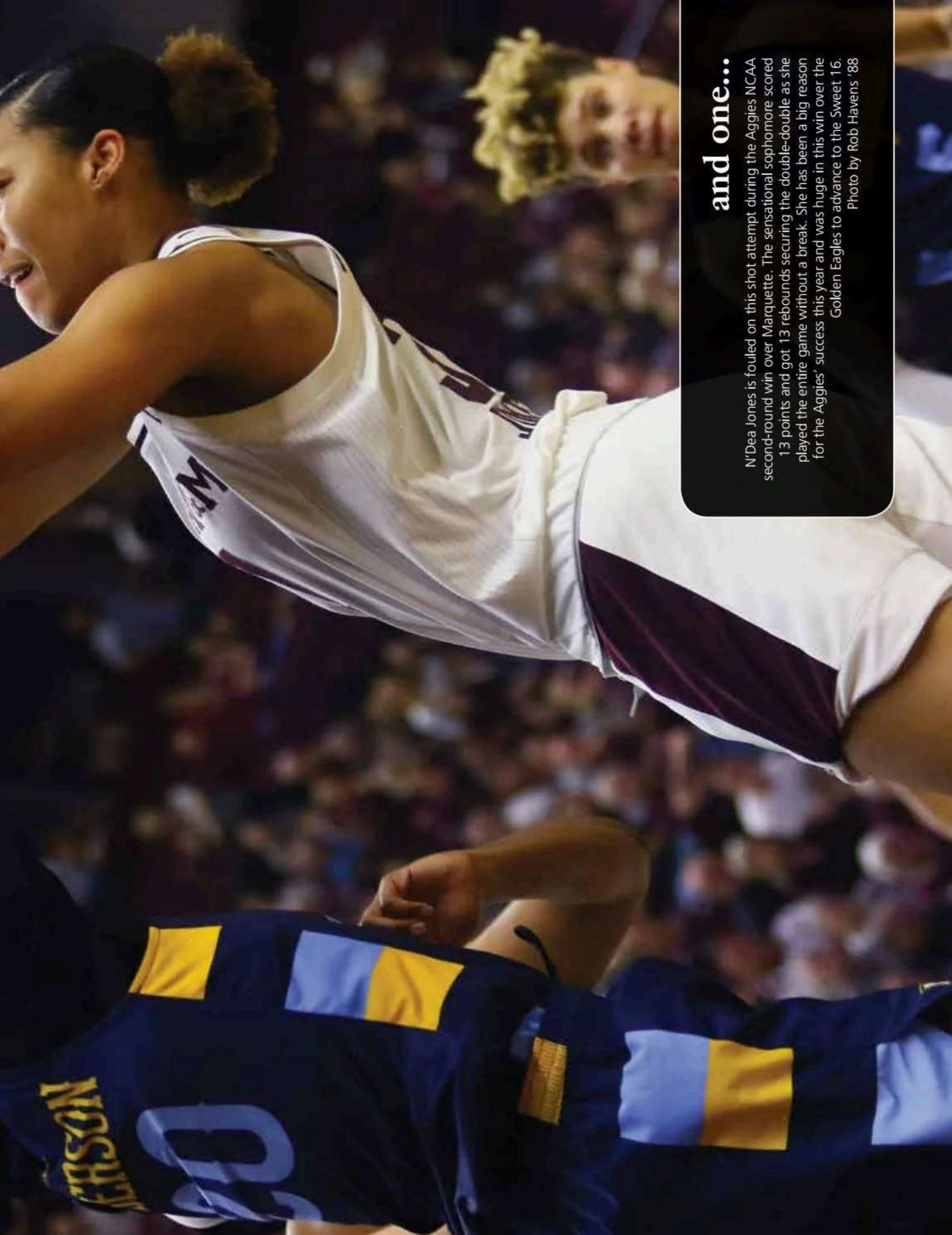
all smiles...

Defensive back Leon O'Neal Jr. is enjoying spring football. Although his twitter handle says "WakeEmUp" no one is going to sleep on this talented player. He appeared in every game last year for the Aggies, mostly for special teams. He had a coming out party in the Gator Bowl, getting his first career interception. Jimbo expects big things from Leon this year.

Photos by Rob Havens '88







and one...

N'Dea Jones is fouled on this shot attempt during the Aggies NCAA second-round win over Marquette. The sensational sophomore scored 13 points and got 13 rebounds securing the double-double as she played the entire game without a break. She has been a big reason for the Aggies' success this year and was huge in this win over the

Golden Eagles to advance to the Sweet 16.

Photo by Rob Havens '88

time to go to work...

The Aggie baseball team takes the field at Minute Maid Park for the Shriners Hospitals for Children College Classic. The field resembled an old Southwest Conference tournament as the Aggies beat Baylor, TCU and Houston to earn the Classic championship. Inset Picture shows TCU Coach Jim Schlossnagle and Aggie Coach Rob Childress being interviewed before their game, which the Aggies won 1-0.

Photos by Rob Havens '88







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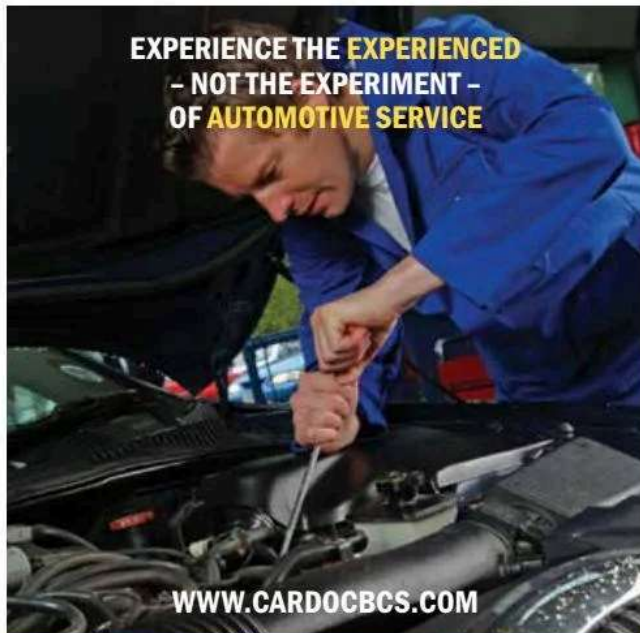
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[BASEBALL] Aggie Baseball is on fire! The team stands at 24-6-1 and is leading the SEC West. After sweeping the field at The Shriners College Classic, including a huge win over TCU, the Aggies continued to roll. They won their first SEC series against No. 1 Vanderbilt two games to one. Then they swept Kentucky on their first conference road trip. The team went 1-1-1 against Missouri before going to Austin and hammering the No. 12 Longhorns. There is still a lot of the season left to go, but this team has the pitching, hitting and defense to make it back to Omaha.

[SOFTBALL] The softball team is currently on a seven-game winning streak. The Aggies had an amazing win over No. 4 Alabama, which was its first loss of the season after 33 wins in a row. Kendall Potts has emerged as a leader in the circle along with Payton McBride, and together they have tallied 17 of the Aggies 24 wins. Coach Evans also made some defensive changes including moving the team leader Riley Sartain to shortstop. The move has paid big dividends.

[EQUESTRIAN] The team had a 10-5 overall record this season including big wins over No. 2 SMU, No. 3 South Carolina and No. 5 Baylor. They made it to the finals of the SEC Championship before coming up just short to No. 1 Auburn. The team now changes their focus to the big prize, a national championship. We wish them good luck as they battle in the national meets to come.

[WOMAN'S GOLF] The Aggies had their best team finish in the Dr. Donnis Thompson Invitational in KANE'OHE, Hawai'i. The team finished third behind Texas and SMU. Courtney Dow earned her first collegiate tournament victory by three strokes. The team will play in the SEC Championship April 17-21 in Hoover, Alabama.

[TRACK & FIELD] The Aggies put a bow on the indoor season with great performances at the SEC Championships. The women came in second and the men came in fifth. They also competed at the national indoor meet with the women placing 10th and the men finishing 11th. Now all eyes turn to the outdoor season and the Aggies are ready to host their first event at the beautiful E.B. Cushing Stadium on April 6th.



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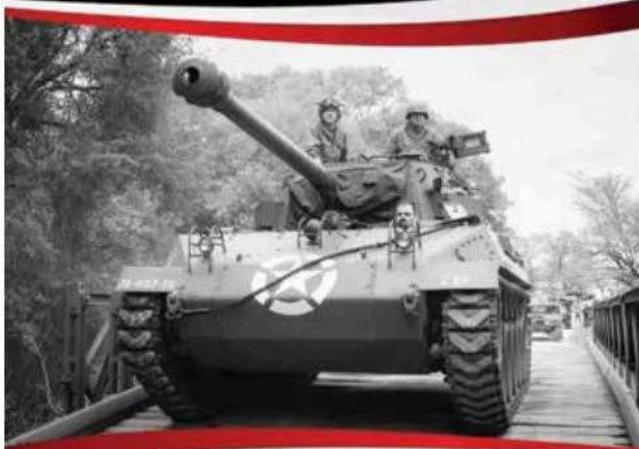
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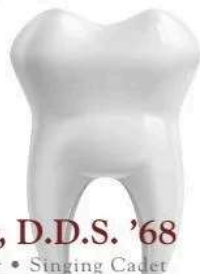
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scoreboard



[BASKETBALL] The Aggies wrapped up their season with a 14-18 record. The team won their first SEC tournament game against Vandy but then came up short against Mississippi State. There is plenty of excitement about the program now as Buzz Williams returns to A&M as the head coach. The 12th Man is looking forward to Coach Williams getting us back to the NCAA tournament again.

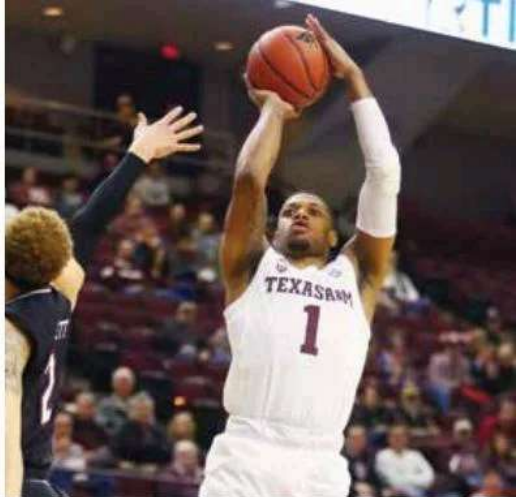
[WOMEN'S TENNIS] The highlights of the spring season include a four-match winning streak over No. 4 Vandy, No. 21 Kentucky, Missouri and Arkansas. As they wrap up their regular season the Ags are in the middle of the pack. They dropped their regular season finale but hope to gain some momentum back over the next two weekends before hosting the SEC Championship April 17-21. This team has proven they can beat the best and hope to prove that when the host the postseason tournament.

[MEN'S GOLF] Texas A&M earned a second-place finish at the John A. Burns Intercollegiate at the Wailua Golf Course in Lihue, Kauai. It was their best finish of the spring as the team carted a 21- under 843 as a team. The team will host one final event before preparing for the SEC Championship in Georgia.

[WOMEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING] For the fourth straight year, the team secured an SEC Championship title. The team accumulated 1,107 points, besting second place Florida, which posted 1,023.5. The Aggies clinched the team victory with a gold and silver medal performance in the 200-yard breaststroke by Anna Belousova and Sydney Pickrem. The team placed 13th in the NCAA Championships held in Austin.

[MEN'S TENNIS] One of the hottest teams on campus is the men's tennis team. They reeled off 14 consecutive wins this spring including a victory over the No. 1 team in the land Ohio State here in Aggieland. The Aggies are currently ranked No. 7 in the nation and poised to battle for a national championship. They are wrapping up their regular season before traveling to Gainesville, Florida for the SEC Tournament. Then it's on to nationals and a chance to win a Natty!

[MEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING] The highlights of the men's season in the spring were two wins over LSU and SMU. They also finished with a respectable fourth place in the SEC Conference Championships. Benjamin Walker won the 200-yard breaststroke, becoming the first Aggie in the men's program to earn a title since the Ags joined the SEC.







THERE'S A “BUZZ”

ABOUT THE NEW BASKETBALL COACH IN AGGIELAND!



When rumors first came out that Scott Woodward was trying to get Jimbo Fisher to come to A&M, many experts scoffed at the idea that he would leave Florida State to come here. Well, those rumors turned out to be true and now once again Woodward has swung for the fences. This time he targeted a successful coach out of the toughest basketball conference in the country, the ACC.

Buzz Williams returns to A&M after gaining head coaching experience at three different universities, Virginia Tech, Marquette and New Orleans. He was an assistant from 2004-2006 under Billy Gillespie. The 46-year old coach grew up in Van Alstyne, Texas just north of Dallas.

He earned the nickname Buzz from the coaches at Navarro College for his boundless energy. Known for his analytical dissection of opponent's games, he has earned high praises from coaches and players that have worked with him.



He spent one year in New Orleans before being hired on as the head coach of the Marquette Golden Eagles. There he had an outstanding stint, taking the team to five straight NCAA appearances including two Sweet 16 runs and an Elite Eight matchup over a three-year period.

College basketball experts were surprised when he left Marquette to join the Hokies at Virginia Tech. It was a struggling program at a football school. In his first year, the Hokies went 11-22 but since then, they have won 20 or more games per year in the last four years. Tech has also earned a trip to the NCAA tournament the last three years.

Not only has Buzz been able to get the team winning but fan attendance has grown and the arena sells out like never before. This year's squad might be the best team he has ever had, posting a 26-9 record and advancing to the Sweet 16 before being knocked out of the tournament by number one seed Duke.

Buzz has accumulated an overall record of 253-155 as a head coach. For a glimpse into what kind of coach is taking over the reins of our program, Buzz tweeted a post-game video of himself addressing the team after their second-round win.

"Clarity of purpose brings perspective," he exclaimed "...That is what I have learned from you guys. That is who I will be as a person, as a husband, as a father and, as a coach. I learned it from you guys." ...All of the adversity, the things we couldn't control, harm to good, harm to good, harm to good. That looks good on a quote shirt but you guys lived it... " Because my perspective is clear it brings me perspective on how I see things ... " We are still playing the last week of March because of your habits. But your habits are a reflection of who you are and how you were raised. That's why we are still playing."

Scott Woodward is dedicated to bringing the best to Aggieland so that all of our programs will compete for championships. It sounds like Buzz could be the exact thing our program needs to fill Reed Arena and get our team competing for championships. The purpose is clear, let's hope a championship perspective has arrived in College Station.



DANCING INTO THE *SWEET SIXTEEN*

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Coming into this season Gary Blair only had one returning starter. Fortunately for him, she was Chennedy Carter, one of the best players in the country. Most experts believed this would be a rebuilding year for the Aggies. But Blair was able to coach these ladies up and they battled their way to a 12-4 conference record. The Aggies earned a four seed in the NCAA tournament and were able to host the first two rounds.

The Ags matched up against Wright State in game one and they dominated them winning 84-61. Chennedy Carter scored 27 points to lead the team. Kayla Wells was outstanding and poured in 17 points of her own. Ciera Johnson and N'dea Jones added 15 and 13 giving the Aggies a well-balanced offense.

The victory set up a showdown with fifth seeded Marquette. The game was a back and forth contest, featuring big runs by both squads. The Aggies trailed by nine points in the third quarter but were able to come back and were only down by two going into the final stanza.

With the Aggies down by two and less than thirty seconds to play, Carter drove towards the basket and as the defense collapsed she found Shambria Washington alone behind the three-point line. She collected the pass and knocked down the three pointer to give the Aggies the lead.

Carter stole the inbounds pass with less than five seconds remaining and knocked down a free throw to seal the win. She had 30 points, nine rebounds and five assists in the contest.

Playing with house money, the Aggies jetted off to Chicago to take on number one seed Notre Dame. Before leaving Coach Jimbo Fisher addressed the team with a motivational speech.

He told the girls to trust each other and to trust Coach Blair. He exclaimed, "Why not us!"

The Aggies played an amazing game against the Irish. The game featured 17 lead changes and 11 ties. With just seven minutes remaining the Aggies were tied at 69. During the game sideline reporter interviewed Notre Dame Coach Muffet McGraw was frustrated and said about Carter, "She's unguardable... we have to just hope she misses."

The Irish went on 7-0 run that the Ags were unable to recover from and came up just short, falling 87-80. Carter led the team with 35 points. Kayla Wells added 18 points and Ciera Johnson had her 12th double-double of the season scoring 12 points and adding 12 rebounds.

After the game, Coach Blair said their goal was to simply make it to the tournament this year but with all five starters returning he said, "That will not be our goal next year, we can play with the big girls, we just showed it!"





Rivalry STILL STRONG

AS AGGIES BEAT HORNS ON THEIR HOME TURF / BY ROB HAVENS '88

First of all, let me say I love Aggie Baseball! Some of my favorite memories of my life took place at an Aggie Baseball game. The best of all was hearing the echoes of "Big John" ringing through the night air as the Aggies took on Texas in 1989.

The Aggies were ranked No. 1 and tu was No. 3. They played a doubleheader that can easily be said was the greatest day in Aggie baseball history. The Ags came from behind in both contests and won with walk-off home runs from John Byington.

There is simply nothing that can compare to beating your most hated rival in walk-off fashion in front of a capacity crowd that spilled over the fences and onto the railroad tracks.

To this day, I can't see a burnt orange-clad fan without my blood pressure going up a few notches. Since the football game is on the back burner, for now, I always try to gauge the temperature of the rivalry when we play in other sports.

Which brings me to April 2nd, as the Aggies traveled to Austin for a Tuesday night baseball game. It didn't take long for Texas fans to show their true colors as Braden Shewmake was injured in the top half of the first inning. Several fans yelled out comments that I have grown accustomed to over the 35 years I've been going to A&M/Texas sporting events. I understand heckling but when a student-athlete is hurt it's time to zip it.

After trailing by one run after one inning, the Aggies bounced back in the second hitting two home runs and plating four runs. It was as quiet as I've ever heard it on the "40 Acres."

No "Texas, Fight" cheers to be heard. I thought maybe they didn't say that anymore.

The Aggies continued to pile it on through the sixth as they boosted their lead to 7-1. To add to my enjoyment of the events, I got to visit with a polite young man in the camera well. He told me he was with the Long Horn Network. I asked him with a confused look on my face, "Isn't FS1 covering tonight's game? Was that a bid deal?" He answered, "Yes that's correct." I followed up "So what's on the LHN tonight?" He replied, "I believe a rerun of Longhorn Extra." Oh my, what an enjoyable night at the ballpark!

Dustin Saenz was mowing down longhorns. We were hitting the ball like batting practice and I was getting the low down on the great success of the Long Horn Network as I covered the game.

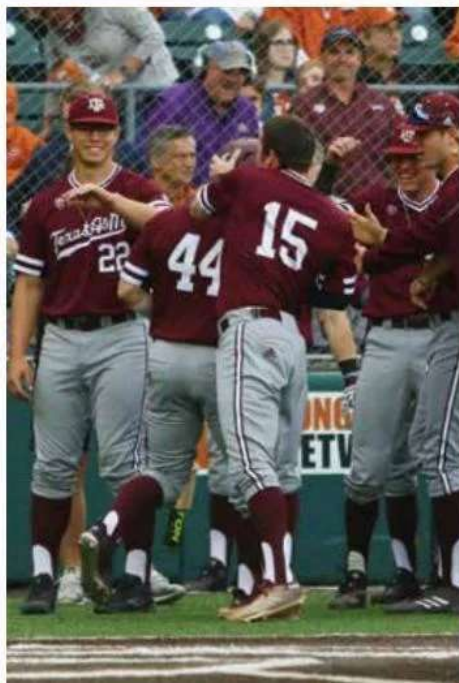
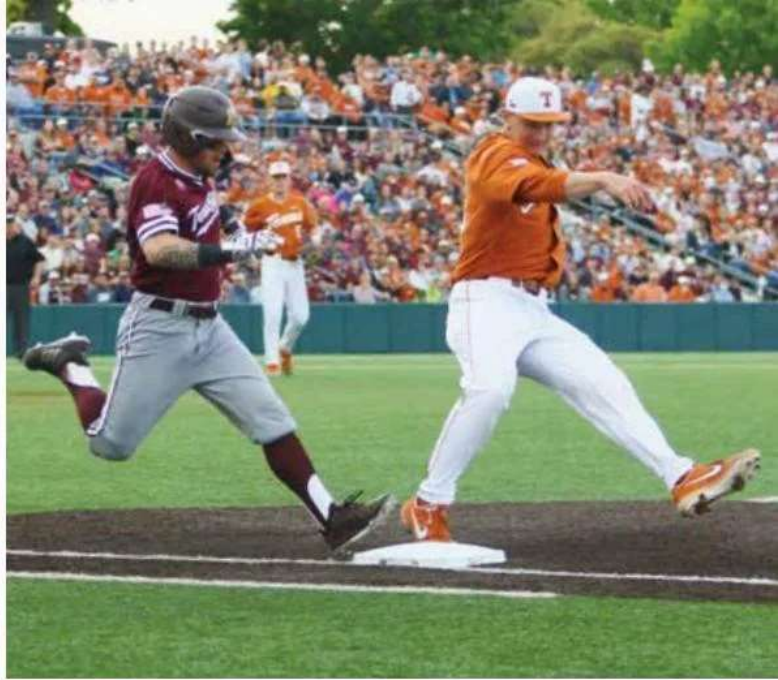
But as things always seem to go in this rivalry, Texas was not going to go away quietly. Jozwiak took the bump for the Aggies after 5.2 innings of great pitching just three days before and gave up a three-run homer that brought the horns within two 7-5.

Texas added a run and the game went into the ninth with the Aggies leading 7-6. The fans had come to life and the burnt orange faithful were imploring their team to take the lead. The Ags, who were cruising along, now found themselves in a dog fight. The Aggies came into the contest ranked No. 9 in D1 baseball while the horns were listed at No. 12. A win today could go along way in earning a regional site host at the end of the season.

Ty Coleman, Mike Hoehner and Will Frizzell all found their way aboard to load the bases. Ty was caught stealing at home as he tried to score on a wild pitch. With two outs and two runners on, Logan Foster included himself in Aggie/Longhorn lore as he hit a ball up the middle, scoring two and giving the Ags a three-run cushion. Hundreds of Aggie fans stood and cheered as some longhorn fans headed for the exits.

Kasey Kalich, the Aggie closer came in at the bottom of the ninth and slammed the door, giving the Aggies their first win against the horns on their home field since the rivalry renewed.

Although we don't play them in every sport, the rivalry is still alive and well. There are plenty of fans on both sides with great memories from games in the past. For me, last night's game was awesome to see. This season has become kind of a redemption tour of sorts as the Aggies have beaten TCU and now Texas. With the pitching, and now the big bats this team could be really special. Regardless of how the season ends, this group did their best to keep the rivalry fires stoked.



'19 RECRUITING CLASS



STACKING IT UP

How the Ags' 2019 recruiting class ranks in the SEC

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



9.



10.



ELIJAH BLADES



POSITION CORNERBACK	
HEIGHT 6'2"	WEIGHT 180
HIGH SCHOOL JOHN MUIR	
HOMETOWN PASADENA, CA	
Made nine pass breakups to go along with a fumble recovery, a blocked kick and two interceptions in two seasons. Averaged 63.5 yards per kick return as a sophomore at Arizona Western.	

KAM BROWN



POSITION WIDE RECEIVER	
HEIGHT 6'0"	WEIGHT 176
HIGH SCHOOL COLLEYVILLE HERITAGE	
HOMETOWN COLLEYVILLE, TX	
Made 30 catches for 533 yards with seven touchdowns in 2018. Finished with 147 receptions, 2,438 yards and 39 touchdowns through the air in high school.	

KE'SHUN BROWN



POSITION LINEBACKER	
HEIGHT 6'1"	WEIGHT 229
HIGH SCHOOL CARVER	
HOMETOWN MONTGOMERY, AL	
Finished with 62 tackles, 15 tackles for loss, four sacks, two interceptions and defensive touchdown in 2018.	

ZACH CALZADA



POSITION QUARTERBACK	
HEIGHT 6'3"	WEIGHT 195
HIGH SCHOOL LANIER	
HOMETOWN BUFORD, GA	
Under Armour All-American. Completed 122 of 240 pass attempts and 14 touchdowns as a senior. Was 238 for 467 through the air in his career for 3,429 yards and 29 touchdowns.	

BAYLOR CUPP



POSITION TIGHT END	
HEIGHT 6'6"	WEIGHT 240
HIGH SCHOOL BROCK	
HOMETOWN BROCK, TX	
Under Armour All-American. Named to Dave Campbell's Texas Football Tops in Texas Second Team. Made 20 catches for 492 yards with six touchdowns in 2018.	

CADEN DAVIS



POSITION KICKER	
HEIGHT 6'2"	WEIGHT 186
HIGH SCHOOL COPPELL	
HOMETOWN COPPELL, TX	
Was 11-for-15 on field goals as a senior with a long of 57 yards. For his career was 41-for-56 on field goals and 146-for-150 on extra points.	

KENYON GREEN



POSITION OFFENSIVE LINE	
HEIGHT 6'4"	WEIGHT 328
HIGH SCHOOL ATASCOCITA	
HOMETOWN HUMBLE, TX	
Helped Atascocita HS average over 460 yards of offense per game and the third round of the playoffs. Named the Houston area UIL Offensive Player of the Year by the Houston Touchdown Club.	

DERICK HUNTER



POSITION DEFENSIVE LINE	
HEIGHT 6'4"	WEIGHT 285
HIGH SCHOOL DUNBAR	
HOMETOWN FT MYERS, FL	
Finished with 64 tackles, 20 tackles for loss, four sacks, a forced fumble and a fumble recovery in 2018.	

KENYON JACKSON



POSITION WIDE RECEIVER	
HEIGHT 6'6"	WEIGHT 195
HIGH SCHOOL GRAYSON	
HOMETOWN LOGANVILLE, GA	
Hauled in 32 receptions for 604 yards and nine touchdowns in 2018.	

ADARIOUS JONES



POSITION DEFENSIVE LINE	
HEIGHT 6'4"	WEIGHT 287
HIGH SCHOOL BISHOP SULLIVAN	
HOMETOWN VIRGINIA BEACH, VA	
Helped Bishop Catholic to a 5-3 record including a four game win streak to close the season.	

CHASE LANE



POSITION WIDE RECEIVER	
HEIGHT 6'0"	WEIGHT 185
HIGH SCHOOL ST PIUS X	
HOMETOWN HOUSTON, TX	
Named the Houston area Private HS Offensive Player of the Year finalist by the Houston Touchdown Club. Made 76 catches for 1,349 yards with 12 touchdowns in 2018.	

DEMARVIN LEAL



POSITION DEFENSIVE LINE	
HEIGHT 6'4"	WEIGHT 285
HIGH SCHOOL JUDSON	
HOMETOWN SAN ANTONIO, TX	
Tallied 83 tackles, 16 tackles for loss, 13 quarterback hits, six sacks, six pass breakups, four forced fumbles, two fumble recoveries and a blocked punt in 2018.	

TARIAN LEE JR.



POSITION LINEBACKER	
HEIGHT 6'2"	WEIGHT 217
HIGH SCHOOL GODBY	
HOMETOWN TALLAHASSEE, FL	
Under Armour All-American. Finished with 69 tackles, 10 tackles for loss, two pass breakups, one sack, one forced fumble, one interception and a defensive touchdown in 2018.	

R.J. OREBO



POSITION LINEBACKER	
HEIGHT 6'7"	WEIGHT 235
HIGH SCHOOL DAYTON	
HOMETOWN DAYTON, TX	
Had his biggest performance of 2018 against Crosby HS finishing with a team-high four sacks and multiple tackles for loss.	

DEMANI RICHARDSON



POSITION SAFETY	
HEIGHT 6'1"	WEIGHT 209
HIGH SCHOOL WAXAHACHIE	
HOMETOWN WAXAHACHIE, TX	
Army All-American. In limited action on the offensive side of the ball, has 22 carries for 232 yards and 3 touchdowns. Named to Dave Campbell's Texas Football Tops in Texas First Team.	

LAYDEN ROBINSON



POSITION OFFENSIVE LINE	
HEIGHT 6'4"	WEIGHT 314
HIGH SCHOOL MANVEL	
HOMETOWN MANVEL, TX	
Unanimous selection to the first-team 11-5A All-District team. Named the Houston area UIL Offensive Player of the Year finalist by the Houston Touchdown Club.	

CHRIS RUSSELL



POSITION LINEBACKER	
HEIGHT 6'2"	WEIGHT 220
HIGH SCHOOL DYERSBURG	
HOMETOWN DYERSBURG, TN	
Region 7-4A Player of the Year and First Team All-Region. Earned the Dyersburg Team Captain Award.	

AINIAS SMITH



POSITION ATHLETE	
HEIGHT 5'10"	WEIGHT 193
HIGH SCHOOL FT. BEND DULLES	
HOMETOWN SUGARLAND, TX	
As a senior he recorded a pair of passing touchdowns, 481 rushing yards, 10 scores on the ground, 718 receiving yards, 10 touchdown receptions, a kick return touchdown, 3 interceptions and a defensive touchdown.	

ISAIAH SPILLER



POSITION RUNNING BACK	
HEIGHT 6'1"	WEIGHT 213
HIGH SCHOOL KLEIN COLLINS	
HOMETOWN SPRING, TX	
Capped off a stellar prep career with 1,493 rushing yards and 20 touchdowns as a senior, recorded 3,587 yards from scrimmage and 53 touchdowns.	

BLAKE TRAINOR



POSITION OFFENSIVE LINE	
HEIGHT 6'7"	WEIGHT 330
HIGH SCHOOL HALLSVILLE	
HOMETOWN HALLSVILLE, TX	
Named to Dave Campbell's Texas Football Tops in Texas Second Team. Earned First-Team All-District honors as a junior.	

ANDRE WHITE JR.



POSITION LINEBACKER	
HEIGHT 6'3"	WEIGHT 224
HIGH SCHOOL HARRISBURG	
HOMETOWN HARRISBURG, PA	
Finished season with 132 tackles, 12 tackles for loss, three sacks and one pass break up in 2018. Served up his best performance in the playoffs, recording 20 tackles in a single game.	

BRIAN WILLIAMS



POSITION SAFETY	
HEIGHT 6'1"	WEIGHT 211
HIGH SCHOOL BISHOP DUNNE	
HOMETOWN DALLAS, TX	
Finished 2018 with 60 tackles, eight tackles for loss, six interceptions, four defensive touchdowns, three fumble recoveries, three pass break ups, two forced fumbles, two sacks and a punt return touchdown.	

DYLAN WRIGHT



POSITION WIDE RECEIVER	
HEIGHT 6'4"	WEIGHT 215
HIGH SCHOOL WEST MESQUITE	
HOMETOWN MESQUITE, TX	
Under Armour All-American. Made 38 catches for 604 yards with seven touchdowns in 2018. Named to Dave Campbell's Texas Football Tops in Texas Second Team.	

JALEN WYDERMYER



POSITION TIGHT END	
HEIGHT 6'5"	WEIGHT 240
HIGH SCHOOL DICKINSON	
HOMETOWN DICKINSON, TX	
Made 31 catches for 724 yards with four touchdowns in 2018. Named the Houston area UIL Offensive Player of the Year finalist by the Houston Touchdown Club.	

ERICK YOUNG



POSITION CORNERBACK	
HEIGHT 6'1"	WEIGHT 208
HIGH SCHOOL FT. BEND BUSH	
HOMETOWN RICHMOND, TX	
Chipped in 29 tackles, nine pass break ups, two interceptions, one forced fumble, one fumble recovery and a defensive touchdown in 2018. Under Armour All-American.	



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POLO CLUB

BY ROB HAVENS '88

The Texas A&M Polo Club began in 1967 with a team of cadets. The current version of the club participates under the rules of the United States Polo Association and is one of the Sport Clubs program's most unique teams.

The sport combines the talented athletic ability of horsemen/horsewomen and the beautiful horses they ride. "The general premise of a match is to score goals similar to soccer or hockey," explained club president Abigail Payne. Collegiate arena polo matches feature three versus three riders that switch horses in each of four series of time periods called chukkers. Riders use offensive and defensive techniques to move the ball up and down the field.

The club has 50-60 members each year, and the competitive teams are made up of four people per each men's and women's team. During some semesters,

the club is able to have a B team, as well.

For Payne, joining the club was an opportunity to keep riding that was practical and affordable. "Learning polo seemed like a bonus, but it has really been the most amazing opportunity," she said.

The members that compete on the competition team typically arrive at A&M with polo experience, but general club members usually don't have polo experience and learn everything from the basics up.

The competitive teams practice twice per week. Club members practice polo every Thursday night and work on riding skills 1-2 times per week, as well.

In Abigail's opinion, the team's accomplishment that she is most proud of is that Texas A&M made history by being the first school to sweep both the men's and women's USPA intercollegiate national championships. "The 2018 national champs just swept 2019 regionals and are hoping to sweep nationals again. Our teams regularly have all-star players selected and best playing ponies awarded at tournaments," she said.

For Abigail, being club president has been a privilege. "It's been fun to reflect on how the club has grown or changed since I first joined it as a freshman. I have been encouraged by how our officers and members step up when I delegate things to them. Getting to work with such awesome people and horses is truly rewarding. In general, the same applies to the club. It's a unique culture of people from all walks of life who have one thing in common: horses and polo."



WAKEBOARDING CLUB

BY ROB HAVENS '88

There's nothing like spending the day on the lake in a boat with friends and family. For Melanie Otto, the current treasurer of the Texas A&M Wakeboarding Club, joining a team of like-minded individuals all searching for that perfect run would be a rewarding experience as she wrapped up her college career. What started out as a quest to improve and progress in the sport became an adventure with her new family at A&M.

Wakeboarding may be one of the most difficult sports offered through the Sport Clubs program. It's one thing to stay on the board, like beginners are learning to do, but to be able to knock out the tricks the more experienced members perform is a completely different accomplishment. In competitions, participants are judged on a point scale and the number of completed tricks determines their total score and placement.

The team competes in different divisions, with one competition using a cable system and the other pulling the wakeboarders behind a boat. The club holds a competition every fall at BSR Cable Park. The event has beginner,

intermediate and advanced divisions for both men and women.

The club has 50-55 active members that practice two days per week at the BearX Cable Park, and they also hit Lake Bryan two or three times per week for those that prefer to showcase their skills behind a boat.

Being a great wakeboarder requires dedication and commitment. Since adding the club in 2006, the Aggies have won two national championships!

Otto said her favorite moment since joining the team was receiving the National Championship title. "That would also be the best moment since joining the team because, although every one of our competitive riders could not ride during this competition, we had a huge support group from the team and everyone's support of the riders who did ride and their accomplishment is a sight that was incredible to be a part of," she said.

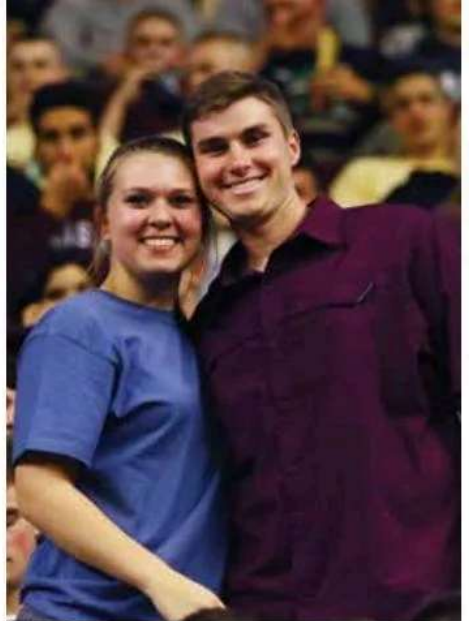
We always ask about rivals when we interview club presidents, and Otto's response was definitely unique. Melanie shared with us, "We have always maintained a solid competitive atmosphere with the Texas State, Baylor, University of Central Florida, and Arizona

State University teams. They are all great riders and even better people who support our team by coming out to our competition every fall. We have two National Champion titles under our belt, so the rivalry in the wakeboarding world is one that puts up a challenge for us every year."

Otto joined the club looking for a rewarding experience, and as we wrapped up our questions, she revealed, "The friends I have made are definitely friends I will maintain for a lifetime. Growing as a leader, person, and wakeboarder with this group of people is something I will treasure for the rest of my life."



Visit recsports.tamu.edu for more info about Texas A&M Sport Clubs.





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